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September 19, 2007

Quentin L. Kopp, Chair
California High-Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Kopp:

On behalf of the California State Parks Foundation and our 90,000 members statewide, I am writing to request an extension of the public comment period for the Draft Bay Area to Central Valley High-Speed Train (HST) Program EIR/EIS.

The EIR/EIS for route choices for the high-speed rail system from the Bay Area to the Central Valley is an extremely large and complex work product. As you may be aware, the Foundation has previously submitted comments to the draft and final versions of the HST Programmatic EIR. We take the responsibility and obligation for participation in this public process very seriously and require additional time to provide thorough feedback on the Bay Area to Central Valley EIR.

It is critical to consider the HST proposal with respect to existing environmental conditions, including impacts to state park lands within the designated possible routes. As you know, discussion of significant land management, habitat preservation, cultural and biological resource management and noise and visual impacts was deferred from the Programmatic EIR to this project EIR. Given that this document contains important analysis that was previously absent from the program EIR, additional review time is warranted.

Choices about HST will have a lasting effect on the shape of California's transportation system and land planning practices for decades to come. The importance of this Northern California route choice cannot be understated. As such, public input is crucial and I urge the Authority to extend the comment period by 60 to 90 days.

Sincerely,

Traci Verardo-Torres
Director, Legislation and Policy

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HEADQUARTERS 800 College Ave., P.O. Box 548, Kentfield, CA 94914 TEL 415-258-9975 FAX 415-258-9930

SACRAMENTO OFFICE 1510 J Street, Suite 120, Sacramento, CA 95814 TEL 916-442-2119 FAX 916-442-2809

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OFFICE 714 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 717, Los Angeles, CA 90015 TEL 213-748-7458 FAX 213-748-7495

EMAIL calpark@calparks.org WEBSITE www.calparks.org



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